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~~TOP SECRET~~/SENSITIVE 120915Z NOVEMBER 1974 EYES ONLY

VIA MARTIN CHANNEL
SAIGON 0643 IMMEDIATE
DELIVER OOB
NOVEMBER 12, 1974
TO: HENRY A. KISSINGER
FROM: AMBASSADOR GRAHAM MARTIN

1. I SAW THIEU LAST FRIDAY FOR A LONG REVIEW OF THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION, THE CURRENT MILITARY SITUATION, AND WHAT FURTHER POLITICAL INITIATIVES IT MIGHT BE USEFUL AND TIMELY FOR EITHER THE GVN OR THE USG TO TAKE. HE WAS RELAXED AND COMPLETELY CONFIDENT. HE ESTIMATES THE PRESENT WAVE OF "DISSENT AND PROTEST" HAS ABOUT RUN ITS COURSE. HE SAID HE WOULD NOW PUT ON THE BRAKE GENTLY SINCE HE HAD NOW USED IT AS HE HAD INTENDED TO MAKE CHANGES IN THREE OF FOUR MILITARY CORPS COMMANDERS AND TO UNLOAD APPROXIMATELY 600 MILITARY OFFICERS FOR EITHER INEFFICIENCY OR CORRUPTION. WHILE SUCH WHOLESALE CHANGES MIGHT HAVE CAUSED UNREST AT OTHER TIMES IN HIS MILITARY BUREAUCRACY, IT HAD NOW BEEN WELCOMED. HE THOUGHT THE "WORD" HAD NOW PERCOLATED THROUGH ALL RANKS THAT HE WAS DEADLY SERIOUS ON CORRUPTION. HE WAS CERTAIN THERE WOULD BE NO SERIOUS INTERNAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS AND THE DRV/NLF FORCES WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY INFILTRATE THE DISPARATE PROTEST FACTIONS.

2. HE WAS ALSO CONFIDENT OF MILITARY CAPABILITY TO HOLD ANYTHING EXCEPT ALL-OUT NVN OFFENSIVE. HE SAID RVNAF HAD OBVIOUSLY HAD TO SERIOUSLY CONSERVE MCONS UNTIL AMERICAN ABILITY TO RESUPPLY WAS FIRM. THIS HAD, MOST REGRETTABY, FORCED THE CURTAILMENT OF VERAL OPERATIONS TO KEEP NVA/VC FORCES OFF DE. HE WAS NOW CONFIDENT THAT YOU AND PRESIDENT FORD MEANT YOUR REASSURANCES THAT WE WOULD GET MILITARY AID LEVEL BACK UP TO AT LEAST ONE BILLION FOR THIS FISCAL YEAR WITH SOMEWHAT MORE FOR FY 76. I SAID HE HAD EVERY RIGHT TO BE CONFIDENT IN THAT ESTIMATE.

3. I ASKED WHETHER THERE COULD BE ANY FORMAL LOOK AT FUTURE RVNAF FORCE STRUCTURE. HE SAID THE ADJUSTMENTS TO THE PRESENT CUTS HAD FORCED A DE FACTO REVISION OF THE FORCE STRUCTURE WHICH,

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HAK, SCOWCROFT, MCFARLANE, ROSMAN, JANKA

RECALLED
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OF COURSE, THE DAO ALREADY KNEW IN PRECISE DETAIL. HOWEVER, HE SAID ANY MORE FORMAL DISCUSSIONS JUST NOW WOULD UNDO ALL HE HAD DONE TO CONVINCE HIS SENIOR OFFICERS THAT THE PRESENT CUTS HAD NOT BEEN DELIBERATELY MADE BUT, AS I HAD SO OFTEN EXPLAINED, WERE A PRODUCT OF A UNIQUE AND TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE IN THE UNITED STATES FOR WHICH WE HAD NO PARALLEL IN OUR HISTORY. INEVITABLY, IF A FORMAL EXAMINATION OF FORCE STRUCTURE TOOK PLACE NOW WITH THE JGS, IT WOULD BE CONCLUDED THAT WE REALLY HAD INTENDED THE CUTS AND INTENDED THEM TO BE PERMANENT. THE EFFECT ON MORALE AND WILL TO RESIST WOULD BE BAD. HE PERSONALLY WOULD BE GLAD TO REVIEW ANY IDEAS WE HAD, BUT HE NOW HAD TO INSIST WE STAY WITH THE FORMAL STRUCTURE GENERAL WEYAND HAD APPROVED ONLY A LITTLE OVER A YEAR AGO. I SAID I WOULD HANDLE THIS IN A WAY THAT WOULD NOT UNDERCUT HIM.

4. ON NEW POLITICAL INITIATIVES, HE WAS CONSIDERING WITH BAC SEVERAL NEW STEPS. HE ASKED WHETHER IT WOULD BOTHER US IF HE INDICATED WILLINGNESS, IN PRINCIPLE, TO HAVE RELATIONS WITH ALL NATIONS, INCLUDING PRC AND USSR, IF THEY WOULD REFRAIN FROM INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE RVN. I SAID THAT FORMULATION SEEMED TO PROTECT HIM AND SUCH AN INITIATIVE MIGHT WELL PROVE VERY USEFUL TO THE PRESIDENT AND YOU IN VLADIVOSTOK AND TO YOU IN PEKING. HE SAID HE WOULD CONSIDER. HE DID SO ANNOUNCE THE NEXT DAY.

5. SINCE I HAD SEEN PRESIDENT ONLY LAST FRIDAY, I ELECTED TO DELIVER ADVANCE NOTICE OF PEKING TRIP TO FONMIN BAC. HE TOLD ME THAT, AFTER LONG CONSIDERATION, THE PRESIDENT HAD DECIDED TO FOLLOW THE INVITATION TO THE "PRG" TO RETURN TO THE CONVERENCE TABLE AT PARIS AND THE TPJMC IN SAIGON WITH ANOTHER INITIATIVE. THIS WOULD BE TO ASK YOU AND THE PRESIDENT AT VLADIVOSTOCK, AND YOU AT PEKING, TO SAY THAT YOU WERE CERTAIN THAT WHEN HANOI DECIDED TO HAVE THE "PRG" RETURN TO THE TABLE, THEY WOULD FIND THE RVN READY TO DISCUSS IN A FORTHCOMING WAY TWO SPECIFIC POINTS. FIRST THEY WOULD DISCUSS THE DETERMINATION OF THE AREAS OF CONTROL AT THE TPJMC IN SAIGON. BAC SAID EACH SIDE COULD BRING ITS OWN MAPS AND BEGIN TO RECONCILE THE CONFLICTING CLAIMS. THE SECOND POINT WOULD BE TO TELL HANOI THAT AT LA CELLE ST. CLOUD IN PARIS THEY WOULD BEGIN SERIOUS DISCUSSION WITH THE OTHER SIDE ABOUT THE FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD. BOTH DISCUSSIONS WOULD BE WITHOUT PRE-CONDITIONS. AND ON THE FORMATION OF THE COUNCIL THE GVN COULD QUITE POSSIBLY GO FURTHER THAN ITS PREVIOUS UNYIELDING POSITION ON HAVING THE COUNCIL'S FUNCTION SOLELY LIMITED TO ORGANIZING THE MODALITIES OF THE ELECTION AS CALLED FOR BY THE AGREEMENT.

6. I SAID I WOULD PUT THESE THOUGHTS TO YOU AT ONCE. I SAID, WHILE I WAS GLAD THE TWO PREVIOUS INITIATIVES, THE CALL TO RESUME DISCUSSIONS, WITHOUT PRE-CONDITIONS AND WILLINGNESS TO RECOGNIZE PRC AND USSR, HAD BEEN MADE PUBLICLY, I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE CLEARLY PREFERABLE TO HAVE THESE NEW INITIATIVES PRESENTED QUIETLY FIRST BY YOU TO THE SOVIETS AND CHINESE. IN THIS WAY YOU MIGHT EXERT MORE INFLUENCE IN HAVING THEM

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PUT PRESSURE ON HANOI TO GET THE "PRG" BACK TO THE TABLE TO ENGAGE IN SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS. AT THE SAME TIME I SAID IT COULD WELL STRENGTHEN YOUR HAND IN PUTTING MORE PRESSURE ON THE SOVIETS AND THE CHINESE TO EVEN FURTHER REDUCE THEIR MILITARY AID LEVELS TO HANOI. BAC SAID IN THAT CASE THEY WOULD SAY NOTHING PUBLICLY ABOUT THEIR "MORE ADVANCED AND MORE FORTHCOMING POSITION" UNTIL WE HEARD WHAT YOU HAD BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE WITH THE SOVIETS AND THE CHINESE IN YOUR FORTHCOMING MEETING.

7. I WILL SEND ANOTHER MESSAGE TOMORROW OUTLINING OUR THOUGHTS HERE ON HOW WE MAY GET MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE OUT OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS.
MARTIN
TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
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